AN INTIMATE GLIMPSE INTO ALBANIA

It is also to be noted, with interest to the archaeologist, that there have been many traces found in the neighborhood of ancient Roman baths, but the secret of their architecture has been lost during the Turkish occupation, if not before. 172

Further into the north and central part of the country is to be found the old Monastery of St. John Vladimir, the most important Orthodox monastery in Albania. Here abounds the richest folklore and tradition of the natives of Central Albania. St. John Vladimir is quite unknown to the rest of the Orthodox world, but great faith is placed in him by thousands of the people in that part of the country. History has it that John Vladimir was a Serbian prince, murdered in 1016 on the Island of Presba in Macedonia, by his brother-in-law, John Vladislav, the last of the mediaeval Bulgar Tsars of Ochrida. His body, buried in the Church of Our Lady at his birth place, soon became the object of a pious religious cult; and due to the gentleness of his personality, the horrible method of his death, and the strange lights said to be seen on his grave, the followers of his day proclaimed him a saint, and his last resting place became renowned for its miraculous powers. 176 [179]

Butrinto

103 HE city of delight for the archaeologist is Butrinto—or the old Buthrotum, a classical city of the ancient world. In the third book of Virgil's *Aeneid*, it is written that Aeneas, after the sack of Troy and during his long travels of adventure, finds Andromache, the widow of Hector, in the fortress of Buthrotum. The next mention of this city is found in Julius Caesar's "De bello civili" which deals with the civil war against Pompeius. The final mentions of this city in classical literature are in Racine's "Andromaque" and in the tragedy "Buthrote, ville d'Epire."

• 172 The Italian archaeologist, Dr. Luigi M. Ugolini, worked in Albania, first at Fenike then at Butrinto. Among the most perfect of his excavations is an ancient Greco-Roman Theater formed in an amphitheatre with many of the sculptured columns still standing. Other discoveries are from the Roman colonization. In addition, these excavations have brought to light many magnificent pieces of sculpture, among which are a head of a

3: Redlich S-S (no date) 1936 EG1 Albania EG1

• 172 bearded man with extremely life-like eyes, a maiden with a headband set over natural-looking curly hair, and a statue of a warrior with the inscription Sosicles.

One of the most valuable finds in this collection is a marble head designated as the "Goddess of Butrinto" or "Venus of Butrinto," which King Zog I presented to the Prime Minister of Italy, Benito Mussolini, in 1929. This excellent work has been wrought with great character and a masterly technique with the materials of the time, so much so that it is believed to be from the hand of Praexiteles or one of his co-workers.

The excavation work is being successfully continued.

Of course, the position of Butrinto explains, to a great extent, the finding of these museum pieces, for this city lies in the extreme south of Albania on the coast opposite the island of Corfu.

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
EG1 Albania EG1

charred corpses, howling like wolves, donkeys, pigs, black cats, crows, oil-jars, brooms, &c. The Karkantsoli is the reanimated corpse of a Gipsy, which is believed to wander about, more especially during January nights, ridden by cats, and slaying men with its poisonous breath.

In Albania, as in all the remoter parts of Turkey, there is no Pelasgian ruin to which is not attached some legend of a treasure hidden, and either "guarded by word and by spell," or placed in the safe keeping of a gigantic Negro, Djin, or other Supernal. Those who have concealed treasure in such places have also, it is believed, fixed the time at which it may be brought to light, and have left to their heirs a document containing a description of the hiding-place, the formula of the magic spell pronounced over it at the moment of burial, with the year, day, and hour, on which alone it can be recovered.[1] At the appointed time the heir goes to the spot indicated, pronounces the mysterious words, and the treasure immediately rises to the surface. Sometimes, however, the treasure is buried in such a way that, at the appointed time, it rises spontaneously to the surface, and any one finding it may appropriate it. The lucky person must, however, be careful to keep his own counsel in the matter, or he will be punished by finding the gold turned to charcoal, and will not long survive the incident. When the treasure is in the keeping of a Negro, he occasionally spreads it out in the sunshine in order that it may not be damaged by the damp, and, at the

[1] Compare the Kürdish story of "The Armenian and the Dervish," p. 169.

6: Lane T-3 (no date) 1923 EGl Albania EGl

valley of Bulqis, where there are springs of 173
strange waters, and that as they passed through the forest—there was in those days a great forest in the Bulqis, where now there are fields of grain —they rested by one of the springs, in the place where the great rocks are standing in rows. There they heard a sound of singing in a strange tongue, but the end of the song they understood, and the end of the song was, 'Long live Lec, the son of Filip i dyte, Lec i Madhe, the king of the world!'[1]

[1]This story was told me in upper Thethis in the spring of 1921. In 114
the summer of 1922 I visited the Mati, accompanied by Annette Marquis 101
and Rrok Perolli. The Mati is a fertile high plateau defended by an unbroken ring of almost impassable mountains. It has never been conquered by foreign armies, though assailed by Romans, Turks, and Serbs; through 1920 and 1921 the men of Mati successfully defended their lands with their rifles against Serbian artillery. The present Prime Minister of the Albanian republic, Ahmet Bey Mati (or Ahmet Zogu, as he endeavors to persuade the people to call him, since the abolition of titles in Albania) is chief of the family which has ruled the Mati since Albania's quarter century of freedom under Scanderbeg, in the fifteenth century.

We were the first foreigners who had ever entered the Mati. We found the country, the people, and the customs quite different from those of the Dukaghini tribes described in this book, excepting only the unvarying Albanian hospitality. We visited the Bulqis, very terribly devastated by the invading Serbs in 1920 and 1921, and partly circled the city of Dibra, taken from Albania by the 1913 frontier line as a knife takes out the eye of a potato. The Albanian frontier commission of the League of Nations was at that time sitting in Scutari, and I regret that commissions do not sometimes travel along the frontiers they have made.

As to the story of Lec i Madhe, we drank the delicious waters of the many strangely flavored springs of Bulqis, and we lunched in the "place where the great rocks are standing in rows." These stones resemble those 172
of Carnac and Stonehenge, though on a much smaller scale, and they may be relics of peoples who lived here prior to the arrival of the Albanians, or they may be a curious accident of geological formation.

On the site of the city Emadhija we found traces which seemed to us undeniably left by the work of human hands. They lie at the head of a valley in a flat triangular space formed by meeting mountain chains,

7 [See cat. 173, pp. 176-187 [185] -- Analyst]

PEAKS OF SHALA

173 "Filip the Second was very proud of his son, and his pride led him to the one great foolishness of a good and wise king. He said that he would make Lec i Madhe king of the world, and that was well enough, but he thought that to be king of the world a man must be more learned than he himself. Whereas all old men who have watched the ways of the world know that to be strong and ruthless will make a man powerful, but to be learned makes a man full of dreams and hesitations. In his pride and blindness, Filip the Second sent to Greece for an Albanian who had learned the ways of the Greeks, and to that man he gave the boy, to be taught books."

"Really, this is too much!" said Alex. "Aristotle an Albanian?"

"Yes," continued the old man, taking the

172 [continued from footnote, pp. 185--Analyst]

one day's journey from Kruja, the magnificent fifteenth-century fortress built by Scanderbeg. One side of this triangular space is the bed of a small stream, flowing against the base of the mountains; on the opposite side, a stone conduit brings water from a spring several miles distant to a fountain from which the village people still draw their drinking water. The present village is on the mountain side above the site of the city. The villagers say that the conduit was built by Filip the Second.

Of Emadhija itself nothing remains but a city pattern drawn on the sterile level land by lines of stones. These lines are fairly regular, four to six feet in width and two to three feet high; they form squares and oblongs, arranged in curving rows, like plans of houses and courtyards following winding streets. The stones, though much weathered and broken, are in general rough cubes, and they are black, while the stones of the river bed are white and gray limestone. Unfortunately, none of our party had any archæological knowledge, but our untrained observations convinced us that a city had undoubtedly existed there at some time long past, and we believed that we saw the tops of walls which had been buried by centuries of erosion from the adjacent mountains. The villagers of that part of the Mati speak of the place indifferently as "the ancient city Emadhija," and "the birthplace of Lec i Madhe."

8:Coon E-5 (1929-30;46-48)1950 EG1 Albania EG1
Highland Ghegs

000 HISTORY is the lifeblood of ethnography, and historians the physiologists of societies. The ethnographer's task is to describe a culture, telling where a given people live, how numerous they are, what technological means they employ to make their adjustments to the landscape, how their families are organized, what other institutions have arisen among them, for trade, for government, for foreign relations, and for the satisfaction of their ritual needs. Although his work is selective, that of the historian must be more so, for the historian is concerned with the motion of societies through time. He must select only those facts which are pertinent to his problem.

121 In this case our problem is to find out all we can about the origin of the Gheg people, their genetic continuity within their mountain stronghold, and the times, places of origin, and physical characteristics of any outsiders who may have breached it. Since there is, as biologists well know, a selection in migration, we would like to know when and to what extent immigrants have left this country.

• 172 These plans can only be partly consummated. History is particularly silent about refuge areas. The geographical factors which have sealed tribal Ghegnia off from the main stream of human migrations and cultural evolution have also hidden it from the eyes of chroniclers, hampering as well the work of archaeologists. Actually we know nothing about its history before the Iron Age.

Only one man, the Freiherr von Richtofen,[1] claims to have found any evidence of Pleistocene occupancy in Albania. He discovered 2 fragments of worked flint directly under a modern road bed at Mali Dajti just outside Tirana. There is no reason to believe that they were not gunflints. Pittard, in a cave near

[1] Richtofen, 1939, pp. 151–52.
[2] Pittard, 1921, pp. 271–74.
[3] Vulpe, 1932, pp. 132–45.
[4] Menghin, 1919–20, pp. 197–202; Nopcsa, 1910, pp. [31]–[32]; Ugolini, 1927, pp. 181–88.
[5] Dr. Robert Ehrich, who has carefully examined

172 Korça in the south, located an equally curious Neolithic deposit.[2] He based his claim of Neolithic age on the shape of one pot, which could just as well have belonged to the Iron Age. Bronze Age finds have actually been made, but not within our territory. A bronze axe, found near Scutari,[3] has been attributed to the late Bronze Age, and is of a type which the Phoenicians are said to have traded with the barbarous inhabitants of the Mediterranean littoral. It has a down-flaring bit and a ring-grooved haft hole, not unlike the iron axes used in the mountains today. Some of the expensive bronze tools such as that described by Vulpe may have reached the mountain tribesmen in trade, but it is unlikely that the Phoenicians themselves wandered far from the sides of their ships, or remained in this desolate region any longer than necessary.

Bronze Age sites have never been located in the highlands. This is not for lack of archaeological research, since a number of Iron Age locations have been discovered and excavated in that area.[4] These sites consist of tumuli. Such grave-mounds have been excavated in Hoti (Malsia e Madhe), Dushmani (Malsia e Jakovës), Mirdita, and Mati. The material removed from them is of regular Hallstatt type; in fact, Menghin says that the objects from north of the Drin are identical with the type specimens from Glasinac and Dolje Dolina, type sites of the Hallstatt civilization in Bosnia.[5]

[173] This evidence confirms that of tradition, that the Gheg country was a part of the Illyrian domain. Two other sets of facts support this conclusion still further, the facts of modern language and of modern culture.

197 The Gheg language as spoken today is basically Illyrian—in fact, the only survivor of

5. Dr. Robert Ehrich who has carefully examined the published reproductions of these objects and who is familiar with the Glasinac artifacts, states that the Albanian collections include Roman objects and others which are presumably Thracian. This evidence would set the date of the sites nearer to A.D. 1 than 500 B.C.

[For foot notes 2, 3 and 4 see p. 39 b
-- Analyst]

197 this once widely spoken group. G. S. Lowman* says of it,

> "The Albanian language constitutes a distinct branch in the Satem division of the Indo-European languages. It is the direct descendant of the ancient Illyrian of Roman times, together with some Thracian influences. . . . At the present time, two principal dialectal divisions exist, Geg or Northern, and Tosk or Southern, which are more or less mutually intelligible. . . .
>
> "In the course of Albanian history many foreign influences have come to play their part in making the language what it is today. Although the essential structure of the language, and a fair share of the words in common use are of native origin, the vocabulary has been borrowed from outside sources to a far greater extent even than is the case of English. In 1891 Gustav Meyer stated in his etymological dictionary that of 5,140 root-words only 400 were of the original Albanian stock, that 1,420 were Romance, 340 Slavonic, 1,180 Turkish, 840 Greek, and over 700 indeterminable. Later scholars, however, have proved that a considerably larger proportion of words are truly Albanian."

[177]

181 Such careful observers of material culture as Nopcsa and Haberlandt have concluded that *the Ghegs,* in their tools, agricultural implements, furniture, costumes, and most other technological details *are still living in the Hallstatt Iron Age.*

174 A single conclusion is therefore as legitimate as it is obvious. *The mountains of Ghegnia were first effectively populated during the middle centuries of the first millennium before Christ.* The pioneers who took over this rugged landscape were Illyrians, whose central territory lay to the northwest. Since they had already lived in Bosnia and Montenegro, they were already adjusted to life in this environment.

172 Fortunately, the materials excavated at Glasinac,[7] the type site of the Illyrian Hallstatt culture, include skeletons as well as artifacts. The date of this cemetery is between 1000 and 500 B.C. The collection of 38 crania shows clearly that the Illyrians were not a homogeneous people in the racial sense. The majority of the skulls are long headed, and represent at least 2 contemporary varieties of Nordic. This is not surprising since most of the Iron Age

[7 See cat. 116, p. 40 b.--Analyst]

* Lowman, 1932, p. 271.

172 peoples of Europe were Nordic. However, 13 crania, or one-third of the total series, were brachycephalic. These skulls have flat occiputs, straight sidewalls, broad foreheads, and in the one example in which the nasal bones have been preserved, a long and aquiline nose. They are the skulls of Dinarics, and resemble both the Bronze Age Dinaric skulls from Cyprus, and the Bell Beaker Dinaric crania from early Bronze Age sites in Germany.

All of the evidence which we have indicates that close kinsmen of the Glasinac people were the very ones who settled Ghegnia, at just about the time the cemetery was in use. We have every reason to suppose that *the ancestors of the Ghegs*, in the last 500 years before the Christian era, their pioneer period, *were very much like the people whose remains were buried in the graveyard at Glasinac*. This means that among the Ghegs, characteristic Dinarics were present from the beginning, but probably as a minority in the population.

174 Let us return for a moment to the statement that the Ghegs are still living in the Hallstatt Iron Age. This means that no important changes have taken place in their technological processes. If the Illyrians had just as good equipment for tilling the soil, processing foodstuffs, building houses, weaving cloth, etc., as the modern Mountain Ghegs, then they were able to exploit the landscape just as efficiently as their modern descendants. The valleys and upland pastures of Ghegnia could thus have held as large a population then as today.

This assumption cannot be made without a certain amount of correction. The modern Ghegs grind their flour and full their cloth in mills operated by water power. This releases a certain amount of human energy for other pursuits. These mills must have been introduced after the initial settlement. Warfare, which is a characteristic mechanism of population control in upland Ghegnia, has also undergone changes. The Turks introduced both firearms and the *kulla*, or stone castle (fig. 8, *a*)[1] weapons of offense and defense. This combination made murder easier than before, and must have helped reduce the population. On the whole, the forces for increased use of

[1] Weisbach, 1897a, pp. 80–85 and 1897b, pp. 562–76; Coon, 1939, pp. 184–85.

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*[See cat. 116, p. 108.--Analyst]